

THE FRIENDS OF THE CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM



**A Commemorative
Publication**



Rescuing the Canadian War Museum From Dire Neglect to National Treasure

Over the past two decades the Friends of the Canadian War Museum have focused on helping the Museum progress from a state of “Dire Neglect to National Treasure”. Telling the story of those twenty successful years is the aim of this historical sketch.

The key to the Friends’ success is its versatility in providing the museum with such services as guiding, research, fact sheets, book sales and fund-raising, as required, to augment the Museum’s own resources.

Now with the opening of the new Canadian War Museum, the Friends are geared up and ready for a new era of supporting the Museum as and when required.

THE LONG ROAD TO A NEW MUSEUM

In December 1918, Order-in-Council PC 3043 created the Commission on War Records and Trophies. During the First World War, numerous war trophies, documents and artefacts had been accumulated and stored by the Dominion Archivist, and they became the basis of the collection for a Canadian War Museum (CWM), which was established in 1942 in an annex to the Public Archives' building. In 1967 the CWM moved into the main Archives Building at 330



330 Sussex Drive, Ottawa

Sussex Drive in Ottawa, where it remained until September 2004. The Sussex Drive building provided limited exhibition and administrative facilities, while a former streetcar repair depot known as Vimy House held the conservation, curatorial and historical research divisions and the library. Much of the museum's collections were stored there, including vast holdings of works of war art, heavy equipment, tanks and artillery and heritage vehicles which remained virtually un-displayed.

In spite of limitations of space and resources, the museum endeavoured to depict the full historical range of the Canadian military experience, and to show how the defence of Canada shaped our country and its people. The museum also served to commemorate the more than 114,000 Canadians whose lives were lost through war and peacetime operations.

Following a long period of neglect by successive federal governments, a Friends organization came into being in 1985 to focus the attention of government, at the highest levels, on what was considered to be a national embarrassment. Concerned Canadians, many of whom were retired from the armed forces, registered themselves under the Corporations Act in 1986, developed a constitution, and obtained charitable status. Funds were raised to support their activities and to assist the museum, and they set to work to redress this unacceptable situation.

By early 1988, other voices were added to the cry of The Friends for proper recognition of and care for our military heritage. In their Resolution 44/88, the Conference of Defence Associations (CDA) described the War Museum as "a shabby and shunned institution due to gross neglect by successive governments" and observed that "the museum cannot perform its roles effectively because it is under-funded, under-equipped and housed in inadequate, insufficient space."

In May of that year, the Dominion President of the Royal Canadian Legion, in a letter to the Hon Flora MacDonald, Minister Responsible for the National Museums Corporation, expressed "the deep concern of the Legion's 590,000 members for the current status and lack of concern for" the War Museum. Subsequently, at its 1988 Dominion Convention, the Legion recognized that the "War Museum represents a memorial to the sacrifice of Canadian veterans in the defence of their country" and formally resolved to urge the proper government authority to provide enough resources to the Museum to permit it to carry out its mandate.



In 1988, an election year, the government was confronted with a dilemma. Although the plight of the museum was acknowledged, as well as the potential loss of 590,000 voters (plus those of their families), other major heritage projects were in trouble because of major cost overruns and construction delays, and there was no public appetite to spend more money on expensive museums in the National Capital. The decision was therefore taken to appoint a trustee to the board of the National Museums Corporation to represent the CWM and to chair the CWM Consultative Committee. Minister MacDonald asked retired General Ramsey Withers, a former Chief of the Defence Staff and a member of the Friends, to accept the appointment and he was so named by Order-in-Council on 2 June 1988. A number of other distinguished Canadians became members of the committee, among them the Hon George Stanley and Dr Desmond Morton.

General Withers was required to provide a personal appreciation within a year of his appointment, by which time a federal election had taken place. The new minister, Marcel Masse, accepted his report and agreed that concerted action needed to be taken. Coincidentally, Bill C-12 had been passed creating the Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation (CMCC) of which the CWM was part. General Withers was appointed to its board along with a second trustee with specific CWM interests, the Nova Scotia historian and Italian Campaign veteran, Professor Duncan Fraser.

It was evident that the government's interests in our military heritage also involved the Ministers of National Defence, and Veterans Affairs, and on 20 June 1990, The Task Force on Military History Museum Collections in Canada was created "...to examine strengths and weaknesses in the preservation, development, interpretation and display of Canadian military history collections, including those of the Canadian War Museum and the Canadian Forces museum system." The Task Force was co-chaired by Mr G. Hamilton Southam and Monsieur Denis Vaugeois, and its members included, among others, Bruce Brittain, President of the Friends, Gaston Garçeau, Past-President of the Legion, and Desmond Morton as well as General Withers and retired Flag and General Officers. Murray Johnston, then Vice-President of the Friends made an important written submission. The Task Force completed its work in January, 1991 and presented its report to the three ministers later in that year. Of its 23 recommendations, the most relevant to this account concerned the construction of new facilities. In arriving at its conclusion, the Task Force commented: "Ideally, the CWM should have the fine new building at the western end of Wellington Street proposed in the Development Plan. But construction costs would be \$64.5 million."

Anticipating that this would be "too rich for the government's blood" given the large amounts spent on the two new museums in the National capital, the recommendation ended up as refurbishment and extension of 330 Sussex, it being vital to maintain a presence on the Ceremonial Route, plus construction of a replacement for Vimy House near the National Aviation Museum at Rockcliffe. The date for completion of the Sussex work was recommended as 1995.

After an initial burst of publicity, the report seemed to go into limbo. In fact it was referred to the Board of Trustees of the CMC Corporation without any commitment for additional funding. The Friends, therefore, returned to active lobbying, holding a press conference to highlight the government's lack of action. It was then up to the Board to determine what could be done for the CWM. The Chairman, Mr Peter Herrndorf, strongly supported the CWM's case and his leadership soon placed it as the top priority in the Corporation's strategic plan with the unanimous approval of all the trustees. Incremental progress was achieved by re-

allocation of the Corporation's budget, with new funding to the CWM allowing the addition of exhibits of the Italian Campaign, the Battle of the Atlantic, Hong Kong, Korea, NATO, Peacekeeping and a new Hall of Honour.

When the Department of National Defence announced the closure of its Land Engineering and Test Establishment in Orleans in 1994, a submission was made to Treasury Board with the principal aim of solving the Vimy House problem. However this was thwarted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's desire to consolidate a number of its Ottawa locations.

THE PEOPLE

From the 128 who enrolled in our first year to the over 2,000 today, the Friends has flourished because of the commitment of all of us to see the CWM attain its rightful place in the traditions of our country. These people gave their support in many and varied ways. They were: the members of the Board of Directors; the lobbyists, the guides, the volunteers, the Presidents, the Honorary Life Members, the fund-raisers and the office workers. Most of all they were those who dutifully paid their annual subscriptions, often with additional donations, over the many years.

Successive Governors-General of Canada have graciously consented to be Patrons-in-Chief of the Friends of the Canadian War Museum.

The First Board

The first meeting of the Board of Directors of the Friends was held on 13 November 1986, attended by: Mr Lee Murray (Director, CWM), Patricia Geisler, Bruce Brittain (former DVA Deputy Minister), LCol Norm Buckingham, Dr Alec Douglas, Maj Dick Mallott, W/C Phil Markham, MGen Phil Neatby, Dr Jean Pariseau, Mr Victor Suthren (Associate Director CWM), LCol Lucien Turcotte, Professor Syd Wise, BGen Bill Yost and Messrs Fred Azar, Leslie Barnes, René Chartrand, Bill Gordon, John Griffin, J.C. Smith and Christopher Terry.

The Presidents and Officers

The President and officers of the Society are elected by the Board of Directors following each Annual General Meeting. Since the first AGM on 24 November 1987, turn-over has been surprisingly small.

Presidents: BGen Bill Yost, MGen Phil Neatby, Mr Bruce Brittain, Colonels Murray Johnston and Jerry Holtzhauer.

Vice-Presidents (in addition to the above): BGen Ross Buskard, Capt (N) David Donaldson, Colonels Sandy McQuarrie and Angus Brown.

Secretaries: Maj Dick Mallott, Col Joe Ogilvie and Howard Mansfield.

Treasurers: LCol Norm Buckingham, Pat Geisler, Violet Parker and Gordon Parker.

Honorary Life Members

The constitution of the Friends provides for "persons distinguished for their work or who have rendered outstanding service to the Friends or are otherwise deemed worthy of the honour, to be Honorary Members." We are honoured that the following have accepted Honorary Life Membership: Dame Vera Lynn, Ernest Alvia "Smokey" Smith, VC, The Hon Barney Danson, Dr Jack Granatstein, The Hon Doug Young, The Rt Hon Antonio Lamer and the Sil-



ver Cross Mothers of Canada as selected each year by the Royal Canadian Legion.

Honorary Life Director

In recognition of the outstanding role he played in the organization and activities of the Friends, General Ramsey Withers was appointed Honorary Life Director of the Friends at the 1996 Annual General Meeting.

Silver Cross Mothers

The Canadian Memorial Cross, also known as the Silver Cross, was instituted by the Canadian Government in December 1919. It is issued as a memento of personal loss and sacrifice on the part of mothers and widows of Canadian service personnel who gave their lives for their country.

Since 1995, the Silver Cross Mother, as selected each year by the Royal Canadian Legion, has been accorded Honorary Life Membership in the Friends and presented with an appropriate plaque at the Museum during Remembrance Week. The recipients are:

- 1995.....Mrs Elsie Wells;
- 1996.....Mrs Margaret Langille;
- 1997.....Mrs Alice Cooper;
- 1998.....Mrs Anna Zuk;
- 1999.....Mrs Loyola Parks;
- 2000.....Mrs Carol Isfeld;
- 2001.....Mrs Ina Galvin;
- 2002.....Mrs Doreen Coolen;
- 2003.....Mrs Charlotte Smith; and
- 2004.....Mrs Agatha Dyer.



Ramsey Withers

The Guides

Prior to 1991, there were no trained guides or docents at the Museum and so, in January of that year, the first course was organized by Larry Gray to train twenty seven volunteers to conduct guided tours of the Museum. Two of that number, Nelson Langevin and Les Peate are still guiding, while three others, Pam Brunt, Helen Ott and Howard Mansfield are still active in the Friends organization.

The Volunteers

The Friends have nearly 100 volunteers contributing 10,000 volunteer hours per year. At the Military Technology Gallery in Vimy House (a major public attraction), volunteer guides, with first-hand experience, gave guided tours of the great variety of artillery, tanks and other mechanized vehicles on



Nelson Langevin, Gerry Bowen and Norm Bowen at-

display. Friends were also actively involved in restoring a 25 pdr. Field Artillery Gun and a 1978 Bombardier motorcycle (specially built for the Canadian Army, based on Bombardier's 250 cc. racing bike). Both projects were close to completion when the Military Technology Gallery closed in September, 2003, to be resumed later in the new building.



Some of our Volunteers

When Vimy House closed its doors to the public the volunteers assisted in preparing for the move to the new building by cataloguing military documents (including photos, drawings, blueprints and technical drawings); and, in the museum's art vault, identifying the hung works, cross-referencing existing catalogue numbers and attaching new labels to the works. In the Hartland Molson Library volunteers assisted with the conservation of rare books and the installation of coded security strips to prepare them for the new security system being installed in the new premises.

Volunteers of the Year

As the demands placed on the volunteer guides, among them many be-medalled veterans, became more onerous it was decided to recognize their efforts by selecting one each year for particular recognition. Since the guide of the year award was introduced, the following have received the award: Norm Bowen (1998); Nelson Langevin (1999); Robbie Robertson (2000); André Séguin (2001); Gordon Foster (2002); Pierre Garneau (2003).

In 2003, the award was broadened to also include volunteers who are not guides and in that year, Stephen Dunne was the non-guide recipient. In 2004 the award went to the members of the Mailing Team - Pamela Brunt, Tina Creber, Helen Ott, Huguette Thériault and Pixie Vradenburg.



Robbie Robertson

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Activity Managers

Much of the essential work of the Friends over the years has been organized by activity managers and implemented by their many assistants. Too many to name, they include: Gordon Armstrong (Legion Liaison), Jim Bond and Don Dingwall (Fact Sheets), Stephen Dunne and Eric Brown (Used Book Sales), Doug Gage (Research), John Hudson (Administration), Jaffray Wilkins (Fund-raising), Helen Ott (Mailing), Mike Bedford, John Collins, Gordon Foster and Bill Vradenburg (Volunteer and Guide Coordinators), Bill Smith (Adopt-a-Book), Morley Verdier (Re-enactors), Bob Fowler (Webmaster), and Liliane Grantham and many other volunteer translators.



The Newsletter

Concern for the plight of the War Museum was not limited only to Ottawa and soon Friends were joining from one end of the country to the other – and from abroad. A publication was required to keep Friends aware of progress, or lack thereof. And so, to quote the opening paragraph of the first issue in June 1988, “This Newsletter was created to establish regular contact with you, the members. Through it the Board of Directors will report on its activities and encourage your active support for the various activities as they develop. We also encourage your views on any subject at any time.” Under Michael Curry, Steve Adamson, long-time editor Howard Mansfield, and current editor by Howard Stutt, that objective has remained the same throughout some 50 issues. As the CWM, until recently, had no similar publication of its own, the Friends Newsletter has also covered Museum affairs.

Commemorative Supplements were issued on three significant Canadian military anniversaries: the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge; the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War; and the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Ortona.

Increasing Numbers

In the spring of 1996, Catherine Thurlow became the 1,000th Friend and a short three years later, LCol Hal Wright became the 2000th. Both occasions were marked with the presentation of Friends’ plaques. Now that a major goal of the Friends – the building of the new Museum, has been achieved, and given the aging of the veterans’ community, such a rapid increase in the flow of new recruits is not expected to continue.

As a reflection of Canada’s military history, each year’s membership card has portrayed the ribbon of an appropriate medal commemorating a specific campaign in which Canadians were involved.

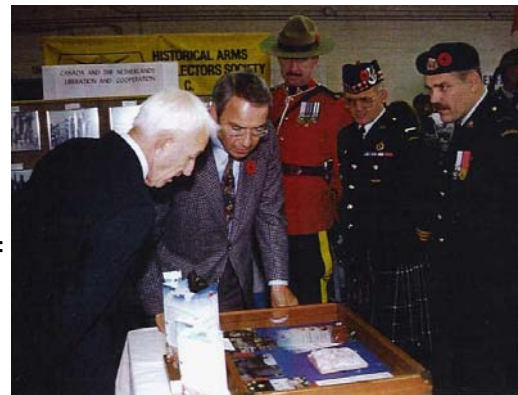
Research

One of the aims in the Constitution of the Friends is to encourage and support research into, and the study of, Canadian military history. The research program headed by LCol Doug Gage and assisted by some 20 volunteers researched and provided answers to queries received by the Museum. In the first year over 50 such requests were received and this rose to some 75 each year. Many of these dealt with personnel matters, genealogy and individual service records, and the Museum just did not have the staff to deal with them. In 1988 the Friends formed a small group with the task of coordinating a successful search for any wreckage remaining at the crash site of the Corsair in which Lt Robert Hampton Gray was killed while earning the Victoria Cross.

In more recent years the historical research staff of the Museum has been increased and the Friends now work closely with them on specific areas of military research.

Sponsoring Exhibitions

Friends provided funds to the Museum in support of its activities but the first major exhibition to be mainly sponsored by the Friends was the *Conservation /s* exhibition in December 1992. Later, in December 1996 a major Photographic Exhibit entitled *Canadians Remembered* was arranged and sponsored by the



Vancouver Mayor Phillip Owen visits the
Canadians Remembered Exhibition

Friends at the Seaforth Armouries in Vancouver. Funding also continued in support of many temporary exhibitions.

Silent Auction

To coincide with the opening of the Museum's Canvas of War art display at the Museum of Civilization, the Friends conducted a silent auction of a variety of items donated by many individuals and businesses. With the help of Harry Martin, CWM staff and many Friends, the whole event, organized by Angus Brown, was a great success and brought over \$18,000 in support of the Friends' activities.

Fact Sheets

In 1991 Friends working with staff members began producing Fact Sheets on artifacts, military events and equipment and prominent Canadian military figures. In all twenty-two were issued; the first: *Canada's Nursing Sisters*, by Pamela Brunt; and the last: *Canada's Merchant Navy in World War 2*, by Tom Brooks and Max Reid. Fact Sheets are now posted on the Friends' website and continue to provide access world-wide.

The Valour and the Horror

In the winter of 1992 the peace dividend was just starting to take its effect. A decade-long series of Canadian Forces reductions had begun; the CWM continued to struggle for resources and visibility; and the CBC aired its television series, *The Valour and the Horror*. The ensuing uproar over this slanted, negative portrayal of Canadian Servicemen during the Second World War sparked demands for retractions, and this was exacerbated when the CBC announced that it would be distributing copies of the video to schools across Canada.

The Senate Sub-Committee on Veterans Affairs lead by Senator Jack Marshall, himself a front-line D-Day veteran, undertook to hold a series of hearings to examine the authenticity of the production and to make recommendations. The Committee requested interested parties to provide comments and advice, and, in November, President, Murray Johnston, made the Friends' presentation. They viewed with alarm the CBC's proposal, pointing out that events depicted in the series had been taken out of context and dramatically emphasized, with a resulting negative skewing of results in an intended way. The Friends recommended that the series not be distributed to schools as young students would view a program at school as factual. Without wishing to unnecessarily restrict freedom of speech, they considered the principle of the protection of the ignorant to be as important as the protection of the right to free speech, and that it is the responsibility of those who are knowledgeable to make those who are not knowledgeable aware that what they are seeing are only selected facts.

The Committee examined the series in detail. Its recommendations included correction of factual errors and, most importantly, inclusion of a disclaimer noting the limitations on the facts contained therein. The Friends agreed with the Committee's position.

The Friends' presentation also noted that the CWM's video, *Reluctant Heroes: Canada's Military Heritage*, required no such disclaimers. It was based on a broad set of facts and, as a result of a grant by the Friends, was distributed to school groups visiting the Museum. Copies had also been distributed to some schools by the Legion. *Reluctant Heroes* demonstrated, in a quiet logical manner, the contribution of the Military to the development of Canada. The same could not be said for *The Valour and the Horror*.

The CWM then decided to offer to schools across Canada its *Reluctant Heroes* video and another entitled *Reconciliation*, which dealt with peacekeeping. It is estimated that some 2,500



schools accepted the offer.

Common Interests

From the beginning, the Friends established close and lasting contacts with organizations sharing common interests, including: The Royal Canadian Legion; The Organization of Military Museums in Canada; The Canadian Federation of Friends of Museums; The War Amps; The Canadian Battlefields Foundation; The Canadian Museums Association; The Friends of the Imperial War Museum; La Société des Amis du musée de l'Armée; the Battle of Ortona Museum; The Battle of Normandy Foundation and the Conference of Defence Associations.

Raising Visibility

Displays to make ourselves more widely known and to distribute Friends' brochures and publications have frequently been set up and manned at Militaria shows and military events; at open-houses and road shows; and even at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto and on the grounds of Rideau Hall in Ottawa. Talks are given to community organizations and schools, particularly around Remembrance Day and we have made great use of a backdrop illustrating Friends activities, professionally designed and donated by Col Sandy McQuarrie.

Supporting the Library

Support to the Hartland Molson Library of the Museum is given by volunteer workers, by an annual financial grant from the Friends and by our Adopt-a-Book program. Titles that the library would like to acquire are published in the Newsletter and interested Friends choose books that they would like to sponsor. The books are purchased and the name of the sponsor is then inscribed on a book-plate placed in the volume.

From 1988 to 2003 the program provided the library with 427 titles - 206 adopted by Friends and 221 purchased with the Friends' grant.

The Essay Competition

Since December 2003, the Friends have sponsored an essay competition for sergeants who are taking the Intermediate Leadership Qualification (ILQ) Course at the Campus Fort St Jean in Québec. The ILQ candidates have to produce a persuasive 1000 to 1500-word essay on the evolution of the Canadian military. More specifically, they must analyze three significant military events and demonstrate the impact they had on the overall evolution of the Canadian military. The essay must be well organized, consistent and logical in flow and include a bibliography. The last twelve essays are rotated monthly on the Friends website at www.friends-amis.org

Oral Histories

In 1999 the Friends suggested that an oral history program be conducted by the Museum. An initial donation to the Museum by the Chawkers Foundation provided funds for a comprehensive interview project and a target of 50 interviews a year was established. Friends were recruited as interviewers based upon their military experience and affable personalities. Two-day initial (and annual refresher) training sessions were conducted and administrative procedures for the program were developed by Angus Brown, the program's overseer. As stipulated by the Chawkers grant, interviews in the first year concentrated upon experiences of the Second World War

Encouraged by the first year's results, the CWM budgeted to continue the activity beyond the

purview of World War II and, to derive the most efficiency from the experience of interviewers, a "project" approach was introduced. Projects completed include: The United Nations Emergency Force I; post-war pilot training; naval carrier aviation, the introduction of large helicopters to small ships; tactical (army) aviation, 4 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group in northern Germany; airborne intercept navigator training and employment; and submarine operations. Individual, "one of a kind" interviews continued to be conducted, encompassing people with unique and interesting military experiences.

All interviewers have a depth of military experience and can relate to the narrator and probe deeply, which a less experienced interviewer could not. All interviewees sign a legal release giving all rights to the interview to the CWM and all interviews are deposited in the CWM archives to form a research collection for public and museum research. Some interviews are used for display purposes and some in the educational and outreach programs conducted by the Museum. By its fifth year, the program had already amassed a total of 250 interviews.

High-Tech Progress

Since our first hand-written membership ledger and our one ancient typewriter in 1986, we have progressed to a computerized data base; e-mail; voice mail and, recently, our own web-site. It is now understood that in the new Museum all such high technology will be wireless. The Newsletter and Supplements are posted on the internet as well as the minutes of our executive committee meetings, the winning essays and many of our Fact Sheets.

Commemorative Activities

Remembrance Day (and Remembrance Week) activities have always been the highlight of our commemorative activities, complementing the annual ceremony held at the National War Memorial. The Friends' President lays a wreath every year at the ANZAC Day ceremony in Ottawa and presents a wreath to the Nijmegen marchers to be laid at the Groesbeek cemetery in Holland.



The Vimy Pin

Large quantities of a Vimy Lapel Pin have been produced and donated by a generous Friend, Jim Tomkins, and these are worn by Museum staff and Friends on suitable occasions.

To mark the proclamation by the Parliament of Canada of the first Vimy Ridge Day on 9th April 2003, suitably encased Vimy Pins (courtesy of Sheldon Mulligan) were presented by The Friends to each Member of Parliament.



MP Brent St. Denis - Inaugurator of Vimy Ridge Day and Jerry Holtzauer - President of the Friends

PASSING THE TORCH

Although the tax-payer had responsibilities for the preservation of this national institution, the Friends felt that the private sector should also play its part. The Friends had always managed to make an annual contribution to the Museum and now they decided that a major initiative had to be taken to raise a substantial amount to add to whatever government funding would become available for refurbishment and expansion of 330 Sussex



Col and Mrs Murray Johnson

Drive. At a time when there was little public interest or any hope of obtaining government support for a new museum building, under the leadership of President Murray Johnston the National Campaign was approved with a target of \$3 million. It was important to have a major donation already committed by launch date and so, in December, 1994, accompanied by General Withers, Murray Johnston called on Senator Hartland Molson and the campaign received its first \$250,000.

It was also important to name the campaign meaningfully, and the Friends decided it would be called *Passing the Torch*. These three words, inspired by John McCrae's immortal poem, "In Flanders Fields", evoke the role of the Canadian War Museum in linking Canada's proud military history to the world of today and tomorrow. The campaign goal was soon reset to \$5 million

and by late 1997, more than \$2 million had been raised, including a magnificent donation of \$1 million from General Motors Canada.

At that time the plans for expansion of the museum included a holocaust gallery in the new wing. Veterans' groups in particular objected strenuously, as there was already little enough space available for the telling of Canada's direct involvement in World War II. A Senate Subcommittee hearing was convened in February, 1998, to examine the whole question of the Canadian War Museum. Testimony, often emotional and accusatory, was received from numerous organizations and individuals, and the campaign ground to a halt during this difficult period.

A remarkable turnaround in public attitudes about the Canadian War Museum then occurred. Their conscience jarred, no doubt, by Dr. Jack Granatstein's book "*Who Killed Canadian History*", Canadians at last began to appreciate the need for a better place to tell the story of how our military history has influenced the development of the nation, and for better facilities for the preservation and display of the half million artefacts in the museum's collections. In an inspired

move, Jack Granatstein himself became Director and CEO of the CWM, and the Hon Barney Danson, distinguished veteran and former Minister of National Defence, was named to the Board of Trustees of the CMC Corporation (chaired at that time by Mme Adrienne Clarkson). At about the same time, retired General Paul Manson, a former Chief of the Defence Staff, was appointed Chairman of *Passing the Torch*.

Almost immediately a decision was made to pursue the construction of a brand new museum to combine the functions of both the Sussex and Vimy House facilities. At the insistence of Barney Danson, the campaign objective was increased dramatically to \$15 million, which frankly seemed unreachable to the campaign team. An experienced politician, Mr. Danson understood the need to demon-



Gen Paul Manson
Our Campaign Chair



Barney Danson

strate to the federal government a broad level of financial support by the general public for the concept of a new museum, without which the project could not proceed. Also, of course, a large infusion of cash from the private sector would allow for the planning of a better new museum.

At this stage there was no funding commitment whatsoever on the part of the Liberal Government. A solid indication of interest did emerge in November 1998 when it was announced that the Government had earmarked a 16 hectare (38 acre) parcel of land at the Rockcliffe air-base for a new Canadian War Museum. Although not a definitive go-ahead for the project, it was a good indication that things were moving in the right direction.

From the outset, the focus of the campaign was necessarily on major donations, without which the \$15 million goal could never be reached. Although there was a steady flow of relatively modest contributions throughout the ten years of the campaign, without six- and seven-figure gifts success was beyond reach. However, major potential donors were unwilling to contribute to a project which had not yet got off the ground, and they wanted to see federal dollars on the table before committing their own charitable funds. On the other hand, Heritage Minister Sheila Copps had challenged the CWM to show tangible public support in the form of large private sector donations before federal funds could be assigned. Something had to be done to break out of this impasse.

The answer was a major lobbying effort led by the Friends. Letters were sent to MPs, cabinet ministers and the Prime Minister urging the allocation of adequate funds, and in a remarkable gesture, several potential donors sent letters indicating that they were prepared to make major donations, but only after the government came through with its funding. Finally, in March, 2000, the Federal Government approved \$58.25 million for the war museum project, in addition to the land. With the campaign's \$15 million, plus another \$7 million earmarked by the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the project was well and truly underway. Nationwide publicity about the site selection helped to draw attention to the campaign, which by now was geared up for the daunting task of raising millions of dollars. The CMC Corporation gave its full support to the effort by assigning a full time campaign director and providing extensive administrative assistance, and offices were set up in the Sussex Drive facility.

The heart of the operation, however, was the volunteer contingent provided by the Friends of the Canadian War Museum. This emphasis on volunteerism gave the campaign a special flavour. Potential donors could not help but be impressed by the fact that they were being approached by those who truly believed in the cause, to the extent that they were giving freely and generously of their own time to help bring a new war museum into existence.

The campaign moved ahead in earnest, and the donations started to flow in. By the end of the year 2000, a total of \$10 million in gifts and pledges had been received. Design studies of the Rockcliffe site indicated that the \$80 million budget could accommodate a fine new building, and a magnificent "artist's impression" of what the new museum might look like was produced.



Some prominent Canadians (including Maureen Kempston Darkes, President, GM of Canada) at the Opening of General Motors' Court on the occasion of the first million dollar gift.



Alas, the euphoria was not to last long. Sensing, perhaps, the changing mood of the Canadian public toward restoration of our military heritage, the politicians were apparently concerned that Rockcliffe was too far removed from the centre of Ottawa, which would inhibit attendance. Rumours circulated that several alternative sites in the downtown core were being quietly investigated, none of which seemed to be appropriate for one reason or another. All this uncertainty over the site had a negative effect on the *Passing the Torch* campaign. Potential donors, after all, wanted to know where their money was going to be spent. Once again, donations tapered off, leading to frustration and uncertainty. Then, on May 15, 2001, the Minister of Canadian Heritage formally announced that the new Canadian War Museum was to be constructed on the northern portion of LeBreton Flats, adjacent to the Ottawa River.

The change was seen by many as a setback and a disappointment but gradually, however, as detailed plans materialized, the LeBreton Flats site looked better and better. Not only did it prove to be a fine setting for the new building; its proximity to the downtown core would attract much greater annual attendance levels than Rockcliffe ever could have. So, once again, *Passing the Torch* was on track, and donations flowed in.

An additional stimulus to the campaign came in the summer of 2002 with the selection of Raymond Moriyama's magnificent architectural design. Construction got underway soon after and the campaign team could now show prospective contributors that their donations would be applied to a world class museum. From the outset, it was made clear that campaign funds would be applied exclusively to exhibitions, displays and educational outreach in the new museum, rather than "bricks and mortar". This added greatly to the campaign's appeal.

A unique development about this time was an agreement with two Calgary military museums, The Museum of the Regiments and the Naval Museum of Alberta, to campaign jointly in Alberta rather than compete head-on for charitable funds. *Sharing Our Military Heritage*, as this joint campaign was called, has been a brilliant success, with proceeds being shared equally.

By November of 2003 the campaign went "over the top", attaining its \$15 million objective, net of expenses, which totalled less than 10% of funds brought in, which is truly remarkable. This success is attributable primarily to the extensive use of unpaid volunteers and to the unstinting support of the CWM and the Museum of Civilization. In this regard, full credit must be given to CMCC Vice-President Development Mike Wolfe and his successor Luc Girard for outstanding professional assistance to the campaign, and to the five Campaign Directors whose dedication to the cause over the years was so effective: Paule Ouimet-Scott (1996-97), David Anido (1998-99), Lucie Chatelain (1999-2002), Lisa Davey (2002-2004), and Gilles Ethier (2004 - present).

No account of the campaign would be complete without special mention of Assistant Campaign Director LCol Alf Rasmussen's truly remarkable volunteer contribution. Virtually every working day since the beginning in 1994 Alf came into the office at 7:00 am, serving as a perfect example of the volunteer spirit that has been the heart of *Passing the Torch*.

An important element of the campaign has been the recognition of gifts, especially of major donations. Although many donors wished to remain anonymous, such incentives as the naming of spaces and programs in the new museum can be effective in bringing out very large

charitable contributions. Because of the War Museum's remembrance function, great care was taken not to "commercialize" the building. For example, indirect namings were generally preferred to direct, an excellent case being the McCrae Gallery. An attractive Donor Wall in the new museum's central concourse will list the names of all contributors of \$5000 and more. Other donors will be recognized in electronic format in the same area. Throughout, great care was taken to establish and maintain good relations with all donors, regardless of the amount given. Personal acknowledgments were mailed to each and every contributor, and *Passing the Torch* newsletters were sent out regularly. All \$100-plus donors were given a year's free membership in the Friends of the Canadian War Museum.

The challenge of raising \$15 million has been met, and indeed surpassed. Canadians from all walks of life and all parts of the nation have contributed either directly or through the many organizations which responded so generously. The Friends of the Canadian War Museum alone donated more than \$300,000 in cash to the campaign, in addition to numerous personal donations and countless hours of volunteer involvement. With the opening of the new War Museum in May, 2005, it is clear for all to see that the torch has indeed been passed. Thanks to the outstanding generosity of individuals, veterans' groups, charitable foundations, corporations and organizations, the great story of Canada's military history will be well told to present and future generations.

ONE DOOR CLOSSES ...

The Friends played an important role in the closing of the Museum on Sussex Drive. Tina Creber gave the last tour to a group of school children on the afternoon of 6th September 2004, and be-medaled Guides conducted large numbers of visitors through exhibits on the General Motors Courtyard. At the closing ceremony, President Jerry Holtzhauer thanked the Friends for their vital contributions over the years, as did Dr Victor Rabinovitch (Chairman and CEO of CMCC) and the CWM Director, Mr Joe Geurts.

Members of the original Board of Directors, Bill Yost and Dick Mallott, were present as the three Museum flags were lowered by Guides Helen Rapp Bowen, Ted Patrick, and Nelson Langevin, who presented the Canadian flag to Mr Geurts for eventual raising at the new Museum.

"Auld Lang Syne" played by a lone piper sounded a fitting end to an era.



Victor Rabinovitch, the MC, Jerry Holtzhauer and Joe Geurts at the Closing Event

... ANOTHER DOOR OPENS

The doors have closed on 330 Sussex Drive and Vimy House and the future now rests in a magnificent new Canadian War Museum on LeBreton Flats. The work of the Friends will continue, but with a difference, although our basic mission of providing support to the museum in any way required will not change. At Sussex and Vimy, tasking was very much on an informal basis and quite often was requested at the last moment. Because of the increase in



the number of visitors and special exhibits and events, there will be many more calls for volunteers. Future tasking will now be on a more formal and long-range basis but we will, of course, be prepared to respond to last minute requests as best we can. Once we commit to providing Friends to take on a task, it will be essential that we honour our commitment. This is particularly true in the case of our guides, because the museum will be advertising our presence as part of their publicity.

Our long-term strategy for fund raising will designate specific goals each year, and we will continue to foster relationships with outside organizations, such as the EME Association, to assist us with museum projects.

We thank those who have supported us so well in the past and we rely on them to continue their valued assistance to ensure the ongoing viability of the Friends. For our part, the Board of Directors will strive to maintain the high standards set by those who served us so well over the past two decades as, together with Friends old and new, we carry the Torch brightly into the future.



Well Worth the Effort!

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